THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

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The New Indian Express wishes its readers a

Our offices and press will remain closed today and there will be no issue of the paper on Thursday

WHATSAPP FACES 2-HR OUTAGE GLOBALLY, NO REASON CITED

Users in Asia, the UK, South Africa and Europe experienced the issue while sending and receiving texts and videos on WhatsApp

FIRST MAJOR SNAG SINCE THE OCT 2021 GLITCH

WhatsApp Web, used by many on their desktops and laptops, was also hit. Meta Platforms Inc, which owns the messaging app, did not explain what caused the glitch. This was WhatsApp's first major outage since the October 5, 2021 snag that took down WhatsApp, Instagram and Facebook, affecting millions of users for several hours before services were restored

SERVICES BACK AS META FIXES PROBLEM

- "We know people had trouble sending messages on WhatsApp today. We have fixed the issue and apologise for any inconvenience," a Meta company spokesperson said
- Meta Platforms Inc, previously known as Facebook Inc, bought WhatsApp in 2014. It is estimated to have two billion users

28,443

NO. OF REPORTS RECEIVED BY GLOBAL OUTAGE TRACKER DOWNDETECTOR

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

Rishi in #10, drops Liz's truss

Rabble-rouser Suella Braverman back as home secy; no clarity on FTA talks impact

YESHI SELI @ New Delhi

ALTHOUGH the Diwali deadline for the India-UK free trade agreement (FTA) turned out to be a dud, the festival of lights produced enough sparkle in both countries with the dramatic election of Indian-origin Rishi Sunak as the new British Prime Minister.

At 42, he is the youngest PM of Britain, the first British Asian to hold the high office, and the third premier UK has had in two months.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi was amongst the first world leaders to congratulate Sunak. "I look forward to working closely together on global issues and implementing a roadmap for 2030. Special Diwali wishes to the 'living bridge' of UK Indians as we transform our historic ties into a modern partnership," Modi said.

At Sunak's first address after taking charge outside 10, Downing Street on Tuesday, he plunged the knife into his predecessor Liz Truss, saying he intends to fix her mistakes, adding the country was facing a profound economic crisis. A tough, new fiscal plan is expected next week. Sunak said he would act with compassion but won't not let future generations pay for debt "we are too weak to pay ourselves".

Many of Truss's ministers resigned in heaps or were sacked as Sunak began finalising his cabinet. Dominic Raab will be Sunak's deputy. He will also hold additional charge of justice secretary. Jeremy Hunt will continue as chancellor. He had begun cleaning up the mess created by Kwasi Kwarteng's mini-budget, scrapping most of it. Hunt anyway was in Sunak's camp.

Sunak's election raised hopes of accelerating the India-UK FTA. But Suella Braverman, who had nuked it by raising the immigration bogie, is back as home secretary. How would that affect the FTA is anybody's guess.

Close to 15 of the 26 chapters that were up for discussion under the FTA talks have been sealed. Before Truss stepped down, a UK trade team was visiting India to take it forward.

"Reducing taxes on whiskey is among the UK's talking points. If it succeeds in getting tariff reduction on whiskey from India, it would not just be good for Scotland but could also encourage other countries to reduce tariffs," said sources working on the FTA. P12

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Together we can achieve incredible things. We will create a future worthy of the sacrifices so many have made and fill tomorrow and every day thereafter with hope
Rishi Sunak, UK Prime Minister

Couple among the wealthiest

Sunak and Akshata are worth £730 million, which is roughly double the estimated net worth of King Charles and Camilla

Sunak's wife Akshata earned Rs 126.61 crore dividend income from Infosys in 2022

He spoke for close to 6 minutes, delivering one of longest first speeches by a new PM

Indian-origin MP Alok Sharma loses Cabinet seat but stays as COP26 President to negotiate on behalf of the UK at COP27

Rishi Sunak (top) gestures outside 10, Downing Street, after taking over as PM; file photo of his and Akshata's wedding in 2009 in Bengaluru | AFP/EXPRESS

Neighbours' pride as roots go right up to Gujranwala

HARPREET BAJWA @ Chandigarh

NEW British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak is the grandson of a Punjabi couple who hailed from Gujranwala, now in Pakistan. Two years after his paternal grandfather Ramdas Sunak left Gujranwala to work as a clerk in Kenya's Nairobi in 1935, his wife Suhag Rani Sunak joined him. In Pakistan, locals has no knowledge as to which particular place or house his grandparents lived in.

Talking to this newspaper over phone from Pakistan, Dr Qamar Cheema, Professor of International Politics at the University of Islamabad, said, "It is matter of pride for both India and Pakistan that if you work hard, you embrace Western societies in their letter and spirit." Rishi's grandmother first went to Delhi from Gujaranwala along with her mother-in-law, and in 1937 left for Nairobi. "The present generation in Gujaranwala has no knowledge about them, but locals feel proud that someone with roots in their town is the prime minister of UK, Prof Cheema added.

Ramdas Sunak had six children — three sons and three daughters. The father of Rishi, Yashveer Sunak, was born in 1949 in Nairobi and moved to Liverpool in the UK in 1966 to graduate in medicine from the University of Liverpool. He married Usha in 1977. Three years later on May 12, 1980, Rishi was born in Southampton.

Seer spoke to a 'prominent person' before ending life

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

A day after Basavalinga Swamiji, (45), seer of Kanchugal Bandemutt in Magadi taluk reportedly committed suicide by hanging himself from the grills of a window in his room at the mutt premises, the Ramanagara district police said that the deceased had spoken to "a prominent person", minutes before he took the extreme step.

The seer is said to have spoken to the prominent person around 1.30 am on Monday. Along with mobile phones, police have also recovered some belongings of the seer from his room. The seer had asked his driver to come around 3 am as he had to go to the airport to welcome another seer. The driver who could not find the swamiji at the mutt, enquired with a priest of the mutt. As the priest did not know his whereabouts, the driver went to the seer's room and found him dead.

> The probe team is not ruling out the possibility of someone known to the seer being responsible. The contacts with whom the swamiji spoke in the last few days will be summoned
>
> — Police

"The mobile phones of the deceased have to be examined which will take four to five days," Ramanagara district Superintendent of Police (SP) K Santosh Babu told TNIE.

Police questioned a few staff members of the mutt, including the driver who first saw the body. Preliminary investigations suggest that the pontiff might have feared consequences over some personal issue which drove him to end his life. The probe team is also not ruling out the possibility of someone known to the seer being responsible for his death. The contacts with whom the swamiji spoke in the last few days will be summoned for questioning, police said.

The jurisdictional Kudur police have sought the assistance of forensic experts to retrieve deleted data, if any, from the seer's mobile phones. Police also carried out a search at the mutt premises. The cops are also looking into the angle of depression, which the seer could be suffering from.

SHIVAMOGGA CITY TENSE AGAIN AFTER 2 'COMMUNAL' INCIDENTS

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Shivamogga

Shivamogga city witnessed two incidents late Monday night as some miscreants attacked a youth and also allegedly threatened the family of slain Bajrang Dal activist Harsha. The incidents have caused concern among the residents of the city which had returned to normal after communal incidents occurred over the installation of Hindutva ideologue V D Savarkar's portrait recently.

Five miscreants came on bikes and attacked a youth, Prakash (25), in Bharmappa Nagara. Prakash told the police that he was hit with a stone on his head. Police said Prakash, who sustained minor injuries, has been admitted to McGann Hospital and is out of danger.

Prakash undergoes treatment at McGann Hospital in Shivamogga on Tuesday

Around the same time, nine men on three bikes went to Seegehatti where Harsha's house is located and shouted slogans against the RSS and the BJP and used abusive language. According to Harsha's sister Ashwini, the miscreants warned that they will take revenge.

On Sunday, the police registered a case against Ashwini, based on a complaint filed by one Syed Parvez.

According to Parvez's complaint, around 5.15 pm on Saturday, Ashwini came with with 10 to 15 youth who were on bikes and damaged his Innova car. However, Ashwini has refuted the allegations. P3

Google fined ₹936 crore for its unfair Play Store policies

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

HARDENING its stand against monopolistic trade practices, the Competition Commission of India (CCI) on Tuesday slapped ₹936.44 crore penalty on internet major Google on charges of abusing its dominant market position to promote its payments app as well as in-app payment system.

The CCI directed the US tech giant to allow, and not restrict app developers from using third-party payment processing services. "Google shall not discriminate against other apps facilitating payment through UPI in India vis-a-vis its own UPI app," the competition watchdog's order said.

The regulator also asked the internet major to cease and desist from unfair business practices as well as carry out measures to address the anti-competitive issues within a defined timeline. This is the second CCI ruling against Google in less than a week. On October 20, the monopoly watchdog had imposed ₹1,337.76 crore fine on the company for abusing its dominant position in multiple markets in relation to Android mobile devices.

There was no immediate comment from Google.

One dies, 37 take ill after drinking water in Yadgir

RAMAKRISHNA BADSESHI @ Yadgir

ONE person died and 37 others took ill after drinking contaminated water at Hotpet village of Shahapur taluk in Yadgir district in the last three days. The deceased has been identified as Honnappa Gowda.

Shahapur Tahsildar Madhuraj told TNIE over phone that in all, 37 cases of gastroenteritis have been reported from Hotpet village since Saturday. He, however, said that as per medical report, there are also other reasons for the death of Honnappa Gowda, besides consumption of contaminated water. Two other persons died in the village in the last three days but their deaths are not linked to the contaminated water, the Tahsildar added.

Shahapur Tahsildar, Madhuraj inspects an open well at Hotpet village

Madhuraj said that he visited Hotpet village on Sunday and residents of the village complained to him that storm water drain water got mixed with piped water in some pockets due to some damaged pipes. The overhead tank in the village has also not been cleaned for several months.

Inhalation of pesticide at the time of spraying the paddy crop might also be one of the reasons for people falling ill, he said.

Madhuraj said that 31 people have been discharged and six persons are still undergoing treatment at the PHC sub-centre in Hotpet. A team of doctors and an ambulance have been deployed in village to treat the patients, he said.

Just a fortnight ago, 23 people of Mandeval village of Jewargi taluk (Kalaburagi district) fell ill after drinking contaminated water. Five persons reportedly died and many people fell ill in Raichur city in June for the same reason.

CELESTIAL FEAST

The Moon shadows the Sun during a partial solar eclipse in Mysuru on Tuesday evening | UDAYASHANKAR S

EXPRESS READ

Slapgate: Kempamma says she was offered Rs 15 lakh to file complaint against minister

Mysuru: Kempamma, who was allegedly slapped by Housing Minister V Somanna at a public function, has sought police protection from a few politicians and organisations who she said are trying to politicise the issue. She has alleged that some people offered her Rs 15 lakh if she filed a plaint against the minister. She also threatened to commit suicide if the cops fail to give her protection.

Coimbatore car blast case: Five arrested, booked under stringent UAPA

Coimbatore: The police arrested five people and invoked UAPA Act against them on Tuesday in connection with the car blast incident in which a man was charred to death in the communally-sensitive Kottaimedu area in Coimbatore on Sunday. They were booked for alleged terror activities, conspiracy and acting with a motive to create enmity between two groups. P5

SPRING-CLEANING

Bureaucracy cleans up its own mess – old, useless files

CHANDAN NANDY @ New Delhi

THE Indian bureaucracy is working overtime to despose of its moth-eaten and irrelevant files. In three weeks flat, the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) got rid of files which, in real estate terms, would occupy 37.19 lakh sq ft or 84.94 acres. Now, that is more than twice the area on which the Taj Mahal rests.

"Come to think of it, the Rashtrapati Bhavan building is spread over just 400,000 sq ft or 9.18 acres," quipped DARPG Secretary V Srinivas, adding the government is on mission mode to weed out hundreds of thousands of files, which would otherwise occupy as much as 50 lakh sq ft of space, in the next few weeks. Srinivas said care was taken to preserve some valuable colonial era files and reports that dealt with public administration, secretariat reorganisation, staffing of government offices, retirement of European officers and remedial measures taken to cover for the loss of personnel as a consequence of Partition.

"Some of these reports date back to Partition... There are gems in which Indian clerks complained against Indian Civil Service officers," he told this paper.

These have been sent to the national archives, said Union minister Jitendra Singh.

As part of the campaign, the posal department freed up space in 17,767 post offices, the rail ministry in 7,028 stations, the Department of Pharmaceuticals on 5,974 sites, the defence ministry on 4,578, and the home ministry on 4,896 sites.